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September 12, 2006

Mr. James F. Bennett
Chief, Branch of Environmental Assessment
5-Year DEIS
Mail Stop 4042
381 Elden St.
Herndon, VA 20170

Ms. Renee Orr
5-Year Program Manager
Minerals Management Service (MS-4010)
Room 3120
382 Elden St.
Herndon, VA 20170

**Subject: Support Increased Domestic Oil and Natural Gas
Production in the OCS**

Dear Mr. Bennett and Ms. Orr,

Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC) is a voluntary association of businesses, numbering over 4,000 members in the State of Wisconsin. Our members employ approximately one-quarter of Wisconsin's private-sector workforce. WMC strongly supports further expansion of oil and natural gas exploration and production in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).

Wisconsin manufacturers have seen a dramatic rise in natural gas prices, post hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In order for our companies to remain competitive in the global economy, access to affordable and reliable energy is imperative. While the draft proposed 5-year plan does include expanded lease sales in the OCS, we believe it does not go far enough. Specifically, we request the Mineral Management Service (MMS) to open the remaining 'Sale 181,' including the northern segment commonly known as the 'Stovepipe'; make available for leasing other areas in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico; expand the acreage offered for lease in the Beaufort and Chukchi sea and Bristol Bay in Alaska; and include other areas where MMS should initiate dialogue with states in the South Atlantic region in a manner similar to Virginia for possible leasing off their coasts.

The OCS resources that could be recovered with today's sophisticated, environmentally-friendly technology are estimated to be 420 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and almost 86 billion barrels of oil. That is enough natural gas to heat and cool 60 million homes for more than 100

years. It is enough oil to power over 48 million cars and heat almost 20 million homes for 60 years.

Wisconsin businesses, particularly manufacturers, are facing significant threats to their ability to create and retain good-paying, family-sustaining jobs here in Wisconsin. Energy availability and affordability are at the top of the challenges facing Wisconsin manufacturers. OCS resources will, understandably, take time to develop. How many manufacturers, businesses, farms and jobs must be lost before the government recognizes the need for a significant increase in domestic energy production? The time to boldly act is now.

WMC supports more domestic exploration and production of oil and natural gas to meet our state's growing demands for energy. We respectfully urge you to take strong action to make as many offshore areas as possible available for exploration and production in the next five-year plan. As such, we respectfully urge you to expand the draft proposed OCS plan to include the areas mentioned above.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. J. Pirlot', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

R. J. Pirlot
Director, Legislative Relations
Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce

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